



## **B<sup>2</sup> Breathe Better**

### **An Anti-Idling/Clean Air Campaign**

#### **Protecting Students' Health in the School Environment**

Did you know that turning off your vehicle's engine can have a positive impact on your child's health? Children breathe in twice as much air as adults, so they inhale more pollutants. Air pollution has been linked to respiratory problems such as asthma, which is one the most common causes of school absences. Modifying your driving habits, including your engine's idling time, is a simple way to reduce air pollution your child is exposed to, especially before and after school!

#### **Why is idling of vehicles a problem?**

- **Vehicle exhaust is hazardous to human health, especially children's.** Studies have linked pollution from vehicles to increased rates of cancer, heart and lung disease, asthma and allergies. Children breathe more rapidly and inhale more pollutants per pound of body weight than adults, and their lungs are still developing. A study by Yale University found that students on school buses are exposed to 5 to 15 times the levels of particulate pollution. Levels are especially high when buses idle and line up back-to-front. Idling of cars also increases the levels of pollution near schools.
- **Idling wastes resources and harms the environment.** Burning fuel needlessly costs money and contributes to air pollution problems that harm children, plants and animals.
- **Idling vehicles are a safety hazard.** Idling vehicles can be easily stolen or can cause damage if accidentally engaged.

## How do we get started with the B<sup>2</sup> program?

Your school can **begin** reducing air pollution around the campus. These following steps will help you get started!

### Awareness

1. Introduce the program to the administration, faculty, staff, and parents through the school newsletter, flyer, or at a PTA or PTSA meeting.
2. Identify individuals (teachers, parents, etc) who are willing to “champion,” or lead, the program. Meet with them on a regular basis.

### Implementation

1. Send a notice to parents making them aware of the new Anti-Idling policy in a school newsletter or separate notice.
2. Implement a **mandatory** Anti-Idling policy for buses and delivery services, and a **voluntary** Anti-Idling policy for cars. Include the policy in the student/parent handbook and on the school website.
3. Once the Anti-Idling policy has been put into place, contact the B<sup>2</sup> (Breathe Better) coordinator to receive your “no idling” signs.
4. Post “no idling” signs on campus, in the bus, carpool, and delivery service zones.
5. Find other ways to improve air quality at your school, such as planting trees, improving landscaping to reduce the mowing area, and encouraging alternate ways to get to school (ex. walk, bike).

South Carolina’s Department of Health and Environmental Control’s Bureau of Air Quality staff is available to assist you in the implementation of the program. We can provide:

- An on-site assessment of the current dismissal, carpool, bus, and delivery services procedures
- Training for the identified B<sup>2</sup> “champions” or leaders from the transportation staff, school faculty and administration, and parents
- Literature to support the desired actions
- Suggestions for disseminating information about the program
- Giveaways such as posters, bookmarks, post cards, pencils, etc...
- Signs for the bus, carpool, and delivery service lanes.

Refer to Page 8 for a complete check list for a successful program.

# an anti-idling

clean air campaign

## **B<sup>2</sup> benefits the school community by:**

- Reducing vehicle emissions
- Reducing respiratory problems
- Providing air quality awareness
- Promoting more efficient dismissal procedure
- Encouraging positive behavioral changes to help reduce air pollution

**TURN THE KEY....BE IDLE FREE**

## **For more information please contact:**

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breathe better

**Sample:**

**Voluntary Anti-Idling Policy for Cars**

Refer to the following guidelines to establish a voluntary anti-idling policy for car poolers. Consider including the policy in the student/parent handbook and on the schools website.

It reads as follows:

(Your school's name) has established a voluntary "anti- idling" policy.

We ask that any individual in a vehicle that is waiting on a student or adult please turn your car off, weather permitting.

We hope to reduce respiratory problems for our students and staff and improve the air quality around our school environment.

Thank you for your cooperation in this effort!

**Sample:**

**Anti-Idling Policy for School Buses**

Refer to the following guidelines to establish an anti-idling policy for school buses in your district. Consider including the policy in the student/parent handbook and on the schools website.

**Anti-Idling Guidelines:**

(School districts name) has established a mandatory “anti-idling” policy for school buses.

When a school bus is waiting on students to load or unload the engine should be turned off to eliminate idling time and reduce harmful emissions.

The school bus should not be restarted until departure. It is not necessary to warm -up the engine longer than 3-4 minutes. If this is a problem because of colder weather or age of the bus, a block heater can be used to help warm the engine. (Reference from the Environmental Protection Agency)

Please follow any other anti- idling laws and guidelines provided by the state.

We hope to reduce respiratory problems for our students and staff and improve the air quality around our school environment.

Thank you for your cooperation in this effort!

## Sample:

### B<sup>2</sup> Newsletter Article

\_\_\_\_\_ will be participating in an anti-idling program called Breathe Better (B<sup>2</sup>) starting this school year \_\_\_\_\_. B<sup>2</sup> is a voluntary anti-idling program which will help reduce the amount of air pollution your children are exposed to from school buses and vehicles while on school grounds. To protect public health, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for several outdoor air pollutants, including particulate matter (PM) and ground-level ozone. These two pollutants are of particular concern in South Carolina and both are the focus of B<sup>2</sup>.

Many local factors can contribute to PM and the formation of ground-level ozone, like emissions from vehicles and industry, wood burning and lawn maintenance. Our school will be addressing several factors that can help reduce some of these emissions. These actions may include reduction of idling vehicles in the school parking lot and carpool lane, tree planting to help filter airborne PM and landscaping to reduce the mowing area on the school grounds, thereby reducing emissions from mowers. We will also be working with our school bus drivers to implement a similar anti-idling strategy while buses are on the school grounds.

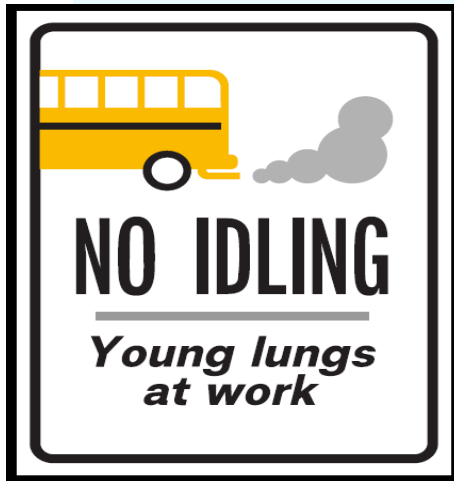
As parents, we hope that you will support this effort by turning off your vehicle's engine during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. We believe that this action will have a positive impact on your child's health. Children are at a higher risk from air pollution exposure because they often spend a large part of their time playing outdoors, and they breathe more than adults do. Children are also more likely to have asthma, which may be aggravated by certain air pollutants. Asthma in children is one the most common causes of school absences.

Look for the new voluntary anti-idling policy in the student/parent handbook and for the new anti-idling signs around the school campus. Reducing idling should help provide for a better learning environment for everyone!

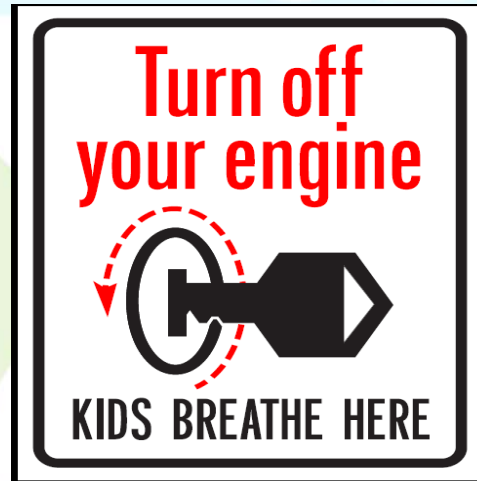
Thank you for your cooperation.



Design ideas for “no-idling” signs



#1



#2



#3



#4

**Note:** These designs are examples of posters and signs that have been used by schools for “Anti-Idling” campaigns. All four signs are not available at all times.

*Please contact us to find out which signs are currently available.*

## Checklist for a Successful B<sup>2</sup> Program

- Plan a meeting to introduce the program to the administration, faculty, staff (including transportation coordinator), local PTA or PTSA and other interested organizations to gain support.
- Identify those willing to “champion” or lead the program and meet with them on a regular basis.
- Implement a “no-idling” policy for the school and post it in the school newsletter, student/parent handbook, school website, and around the campus.
- Contact the B<sup>2</sup> (Breathe Better) coordinator to receive your “no idling” signs
- Post "no idling" signs in the bus, carpool, and delivery services in pick up and drop off areas.
- Redesign or relocate the bus parking and car pool zones to move vehicles away from school air intake vents.
- Improve the efficiency of the dismissal procedures for bus and carpool pick up and drop off.
- Recruit local businesses to participate in or support the program
- Recommend planting trees, improving landscaping, and reducing mowing to cut down on emissions from lawn equipment

### For more information, visit the following websites:

DHEC Bureau of Air Quality

<http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/baq/>

Clean School Bus USA

<http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>

National Air Quality Forecast

<http://airnow.gov/>

Children’s Environmental Health Excellence Awards

[http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/2007\\_CEH\\_Excellence\\_Awards.htm](http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/2007_CEH_Excellence_Awards.htm)